

Subject: methods in clinical reports
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Date: Thu, 13 May 2004 20:15:41 -0400
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Clem,

Thanks for your note of May 10, and the interesting correspondence with Mareike Reisig about the creation of more method specific LOINC codes. I was able to open the Access database without any problem.

I think I understand what is wanted (although I am not familiar with "border ranges"), but agree with your arguments as to why this is not a core responsibility for LOINC. I can see these method specific codes have a place in proficiency testing programs, method evaluations, etc., etc., but would not like to contemplate reviewing a clinical chart with separate columns for every conceivable method for measuring calcium, or sodium, or bilirubin, or whatever, unless there was significant difference between them.

However, assuming the folks in Germany do want to do this, using the LOINC structure, paragraph 3 under Copyright Notice and License in the LOINC Users' Guide, seems to offer a way:

3) A user may delete records from the LOINC database to deal with the user's local requirements. A user also may add new records to the LOINC database to deal with the users' local requirements, provided that if new records are added, any new entry in the LOINC_NUM field (field #1) of such new records must contain a leading alphabetic "X" so that the new codes and records cannot be confused with existing LOINC codes or new LOINC codes as they are defined in later releases of the LOINC database. Records deleted or added by users to deal with local requirements are not reflected in the official LOINC database maintained by the Regenstrief Institute and the LOINC Committee.

As I interpret this, to satisfy local requirements I can create an X coded entry, and define it as necessary for the task at hand – in this case, to add method specificity to the extent required. So their local table would look like

X00001	CALCIUM:SCNC:PT:SER:QN:atomic absorption spectrometry
X00002	CALCIUM:SCNC:PT:SER:QN:methylthymol blue
X00003	CALCIUM:SCNC:PT:SER:QN:o-cresolphtalein complexone
X00004	CALCIUM:SCNC:PT:SER:QN:flame photometry

This seems a simple, convenient way to keep track of the different methods, and does not involve any assumptions about HL-7 use.

Gil